

## Steal This Hook! Gold, Silver, and Copper

By Robert Wiese



A glint of gold, silver, or brass flashes in the sky far away. An air of condescension and tolerance crosses the creature's expression as it looks down upon your small form. Fear and reverence and avarice flare across its features all at the same time. This month is all about dragons, and metallic ones at that. Even though they're always good (everywhere except Eberron, of course), they can still play really interesting roles in adventures other than "ally of the heroes" or "source of information for the heroes" or even "one who looks down on the heroes and makes them feel small."

### Parts Is Parts -- *Eberron*

The town of New Cyre in eastern Breland is the new home of the refugees of the ruined nation of Cyre. The town began as a refugee camp and is now quite large. To this place comes a group of five half-orc merchants, laden with wares to sell. This is not at all unusual, and, except for the wares, the half-orcs don't attract any suspicious notice -- at least not at first.

The leader of the group, Halk-Astan (half-orc bard/scout), works the group's stall in the market. He tells a fantastic story that introduces buyers to his wares: parts from a gold dragon. "That's right," he says. "A gold dragon. We don't even see gold dragons on Khorvair normally, but my troop and I were incredibly lucky. We were in the Seawall Mountains, prospecting for whatever minerals we could find, and also looking to slay some goblinoids. On our third day, we saw a huge shape fly overhead, and we were so surprised to see a golden dragon flying above us. Now, I don't know what it was doing there, but about an hour later we saw a silver dragon just as big flying off in the same direction. Then we heard the fighting. The two dragons were going at each other with all they had, let me tell you. Finally, the silver one slew the gold one and it plummeted to the ground -- well over 200 feet I'd say. We couldn't pass up this good fortune, since we figured that parts from a gold dragon are worth a lot to spellcasters. So we harvested what we could, and now we offer them to you at very reasonable prices."



The problem, of course, is that the parts are not from a gold dragon at all. They are from wyverns that the half-orcs slew in the mountains. Suspicion begins to mount a day or two after the half-orcs leave town, since the parts don't work in magic potions and spells as their users had hoped. Several wizards who feel cheated of the large sums they paid want the adventurers to track down the orcs, find out what really happened, and get their money back. Of course, if any real gold dragons are involved, the wizards would take real parts instead of their money.

### d100 Motivations

01-40 The wizards are sincere in their desires, especially the part about replacement gold dragon parts.

41-75 The half-orcs told the truth (sort of); they really are gold dragon parts. The wizards think these erstwhile merchants have more and want the adventurers to trace the half-orcs down so the wizards can swoop in and steal the rest.

76-00 Halk-Astan is really a gold dragon in disguise, and he wants the heroes to go clean out the Seven Caves of wyverns so he can study the Prophecy. He hopes that using the wyvern parts will lead suspicious folk to the wyvern-infested caves, and he makes sure to plant some rumors that the half-orcs were heading that way.

### d100 Complications

01-45 Wyverns live and breed in the Seven Caves, and the adventurers could have a lot of difficulty with them.

46-70 The Seven Caves is supposed to contain a part of the draconic Prophecy. Dragonmarks swirl across their surfaces, and few have ever tried to study them. A gold dragon is there now, in the fifth cave, trying to piece together a part of the Prophecy that came to him in a dream. He is not evil, but he is not good, either, and will object to having parts taken.

71-00 Goblinoids from Darguun are in the same area, and they don't take kindly to the adventurers learning about their activities in the area.

### Put That Back! -- *Forgotten Realms*

Dragons can be found anywhere in Faerûn, or so it seems. The people of the land



are used to them living in far-away mountains and only occasionally appearing (at least in dragon form) in civilized lands. So the residents of a small town just south of the Serpent Hills are surprised when a copper dragon lands in the middle town and demands that the townspeople rebuild its hoard. It claims that human adventurers stole its hoard while it was away, and that the humans owe restitution. It grabs a random townspeople and flies off, promising to come back and take his recompense out of the lives of the townspeople if they don't comply.

### Campaign Adaptation

This hook can be adapted for different campaign worlds. If you want to read more to help you prepare, [Draconomicon](#) should help you with any dragons that you introduce into the adventure, and [Races of Destiny](#) can help with the half-orcs.

**Forgotten Realms:** This adventure would work well in the Earthfast Mountains and the Vast, in the Graypeak Mountains and Loudwater, or Orsraun Mountains and Turmish.

**Eberron:** Set it in the Seawall Mountains, as written.

**Generic:** The main requirement for this adventure is that you have some mountains where a dragon might live. Creating a wondrous cave complex that would attract dragons is not necessary; you could just have some dragon lairs in the vicinity.

**d20 Modern:** No real dragons are involved, and the parts come from some other known monster whose parts are valuable. Set in Siberia or Alaska.

The people of the town don't feel that they should pay this steep price for something they didn't even do, so they look for some heroes to solve their problem by tracking down this dragon and dealing with it. Some wonder why a good dragon would behave this way, but in light of imminent destruction, they are not that concerned about the oddness of it.

Killing a dragon that has no treasure is not a very rewarding task, so the townspeople point out that a lot of other dragons lair in the Serpent Hills, and if player characters could kill one of the evil ones they would be quite wealthy. The townspeople might even offer a map of reputed dragon dens, which local rangers keep just in case the knowledge could be useful someday (though knowing where NOT to go can certainly come in handy, too). These hoards could contain Netherese magic, among other things, because some of the dragons in the Serpent Hills are very old.

### d100 Motivations

01-40 The town is really in trouble, but not from the copper dragon that landed there. The copper dragon is actually a red dragon that is using this stratagem to add to its own hoard, and it hopes that the townspeople won't try to kill a good creature but will try to negotiate.

41-80 The copper dragon has been rendered insane by one of the magic items in its hoard. It is really good, but must be cured of its insanity and the item removed from the hoard for everything to end happily.

81-00 One of the townspeople offers the heroes a pretty penny for any copper dragon parts they can acquire, since those are difficult to come by. Further, he offers to help them make armor from any scales they bring back.

### d100 Complications

01-50 Red dragons in the Serpent Hills are entertained by the story of the renegade copper, but they are not entertained by the presence of heroes who like to steal dragons' hoards.

51-70 The copper dragon is an illusion created by a wizard that plans to steal the tribute once it is collected.

71-00 The adventurers run afoul of yuan-ti while on their quest. The yuan-ti offer to help the adventurers (any dead dragons are a benefit to them), but later double-cross the heroes.

## Heart of Silver -- *Forgotten Realms*

Before the modern races stepped onto the Faerûnian stage, the great wyrms ruled the land and acted with impunity, since they were unchallenged by any other

### Campaign Adaptation

If you need some suggestions for different campaign worlds, you'll find them below. Additionally, *Draconomicon* should help you with the dragons. If the evil wizard is present, you'll want [Complete Arcane](#) and maybe *Spell Compendium* to really make him a challenge for your player characters. Yuan-ti are covered in several books, including [Savage Species](#).

**Forgotten Realms:** Set it in the Serpent Hills, as written.

**Eberron:** The presence of a copper dragon would be very unusual on Khorvaire, so set this adventure on Aerenal where the elves are in a constant war (of sorts) with the dragons of Argonnessen.

**Generic:** Mountains and a town nearby are all you need. It would help if dragons really did live in the mountains, but the adventure takes on a new level of mystery if it is not widely known that dragons live in the mountains.

**d20 Modern:** This adventure would probably work best on another planet (*d20 Future*), where dragons could be more populous. Alternatively, you could make this whole thing a yuan-ti experiment or deception and place it in some remote location in South America, using dinosaurs or giant snakes or something like that.





creator race. Eventually, the lesser races mastered magic and became threats to the dragons. And thus the world began to change. In the last years of this time, the greatest human wizards tried to gain control of the oldest and most powerful silver dragon in existence, Kinenthurnurnverasal. The dragon proved too powerful for them, but they put it into stasis nonetheless. They cut out its heart and made of the heart a powerful amulet that contained the dragon's life force. Then they broke the heart into three pieces. Eventually the pieces went to different owners. In the present day, two are held by two rogues in Waterdeep (read the Rogues and Ruffians section in *City of Splendors: Waterdeep* for a few ideas on specific beings you may want to choose), and the third is lost to history.



The body of Kinenthurnurnverasal remains in stasis in a cave deep beneath the Orsraun Mountains, where no one has found it in generations. Legends from that ancient time say that if the heart of Kinenthurnurnverasal can be remade and restored to his preserved body, the dragon will be reborn and that the one who does this can command service from the ancient and powerful dragon as one would do with a genie.

Should this tale reach the ears of the rogues, their initial tendency is to never cooperate with any plan to restore the dragon to life because each would be afraid that the other would gain the benefit.

The adventure begins for the heroes when they find the lost piece in a hoard of treasure held by the Zhentarim, who know the item is magic but have no idea what it does. The heroes find out (perhaps via a sage or other luminary that the PCs visit regularly), and they then have to collect the two pieces from the rival rogues. Their sponsor, should they need one, is the sage who informs them what the heart piece really is.

Since the heroes start this adventure of their own volition, the usual Motivations section doesn't apply.

### d100 Complications

01-25 One or both of the rival rogues offers to help in the quest, but provides a false heart piece and then follows the heroes to the body to claim the rewards for himself or herself.

26-45 The legend is only partly true. The ancient dragon has become evil because of what happened to it, and the heroes have to stop it from unleashing its ancient might on the world.

46-70 The whole legend is false. There is an artifact that is in three pieces, but it is not the heart of an ancient dragon. The sage who tells them this knows what it really is and plans to acquire it from the heroes once they have the whole artifact.

### Campaign Adaptation

If you want to use this in different campaign worlds, take a look at the suggestions that follow. Also, *City of Splendors: Waterdeep* should be invaluable for the first part of the adventure, including selecting or creating the rogues involved. The Orsraun Mountains are full of monsters, so just about any book (including the upcoming [Monster Manual IV](#)) will have you cackling with glee as you select encounters with which to plague your adventurers and make their approach to the ancient body as difficult as it should be.

**Forgotten Realms:** Use it as written.

**Eberron:** In Eberron, the dragons ruled the ancient world, too, and now have retreated to Argonnessen. The heroes could find the lost piece on Khorvaire, then collect the two other pieces from rival thieves' guildmasters in Sharn, before undertaking the really dangerous journey into Argonnessen to fulfill this ancient story.

**Generic:** A large city with rival guildmasters serves as the starting point, and you can put the ancient dragon's body anywhere.

**d20 Modern:** This adventure requires significant modification to work well on Modern Earth. Perhaps the dragon was a powerful antediluvian creature, and the

71-90 A modern-day dragon believes that should it place the heart within itself, that it will acquire the power of the ancient dragon through its trapped life force and become invincible. This dragon plagues the heroes every step of their quest.

wizards who put it into stasis were aliens of some kind.

91-00 The heart pieces have a curse on them that inflicts anyone who steals them from their current owner with a wasting disease that requires an epic spellcaster to cure.

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## About the Author

**Robert Wiese** entered the gaming hobby through the Boy Scouts and progressed from green recruit to head of the most powerful gaming fan organization in the world. He served as head of the RPGA Network for almost seven years, overseeing the creation of the **Living Greyhawk** and **Living Force** campaigns, among other achievements. Eventually, he returned to private life in Reno, Nevada, where he spends as much time as possible with his wife, new son Owen, and many pets.

He is still involved in writing, organizing conventions, and playing, and he models proteins for the Biochemistry Department of the University of Nevada, Reno.

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